



“RETURN TO THE LORD”

Wednesday Lenten Worship

March 20, 2024

7:00 p.m.

St. John’s Lutheran Church, Schubert

RETURN TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

AS WE GATHER

In the conclusion of his First Letter to his co-worker Timothy, Paul encourages his young friend with a shared vision of what is to come as God fulfills all things. He writes of “the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will display at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (1 Timothy 6:14–15). As Jesus stood before Pilate, who seemed to have the full authority of life and death over Him, our Savior knew who He was and what His kingdom was and is and will be. “My kingdom is not of this world,” Jesus stated (John 18:36a). With the psalmist, we affirm, “The LORD will reign forever” (Psalm 146:10). The very best and most blessed time under His gracious kingship is yet to be!

+ PREPARATION +

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

OPENING HYMN

“O Jesus, King Most Wonderful” (TLH 361)

**O Jesus, King most wonderful, Thou Conqueror renowned,
Thou Sweetness most ineffable, In whom all joys are found!**

**When once Thou visitest the heart, Then truth begins to shine,
Then earthly vanities depart, Then kindles love divine.**

**O Jesus, Light of all below, Thou Fount of life and fire,
Surpassing all the joys we know, All that we can desire.**

**May every heart confess Thy name And ever Thee adore
And, seeking Thee, itself inflame To seek Thee more and more!**

**Thee may our tongues forever bless, Thee may we love alone,
And ever in our lives express The image of Thine own! Amen.**

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Joel 2:13; Psalm 103:10; 79:9

- P Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful,
C **slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil.**
- P He does not deal with us according to our sins,
C **nor repay us according to our iniquities.**
- P Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name;
C **deliver us, and atone for our sins, for Your name's sake!**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

TLH, p. 5

- P Let us make our confession to our God, seeking His grace and forgiveness.
Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto Thee that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against Thee by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Thine infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Thy grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- All **O most merciful God, who hast given Thine only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Thy Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of Thee and of Thy Will and true obedience to Thy Word, to the end that by Thy grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**
- P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, hath had mercy upon us and hath given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgiveth us all our sins. To them that believe on His name He giveth power to become the sons of God and hath promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all.
- C **Amen.**

SALUTATION

- P The Lord be with you.
C **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- P Let us pray.
- All **O God our Father, grant that, despite our failures and sins, we find redemption through our Savior Jesus Christ, and with hopeful hearts await the glory of His kingdom of eternal grace. With boldness and confidence, we ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

+ WORD +

FIRST READING

Isaiah 53:1-3

¹ Who has believed what they heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
² For He grew up before Him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him,
and no beauty that we should desire Him.
³ He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalms 25:1-7

P To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

C **O my God, in You I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me.**

P Indeed, none who wait for You shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

C **Make me to know Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths.**

P Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; for You I wait all the day long.

C **Remember Your mercy, O LORD, and Your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.**

P Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

C **according to Your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD!**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

SECOND READING

1 Timothy 2:1-7

¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom for all, ⁷ which is the testimony given at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

“Glory Be to Jesus” (TLH 158)

**Glory be to Jesus, Who in bitter pains
Poured for me the lifeblood From His sacred veins!
Grace and life eternal In that blood I find;
Blest be His compassion, Infinitely kind!
Blest through endless ages Be the precious stream
Which from endless torments Did the world redeem!
Abel’s blood for vengeance Pleaded to the skies;
But the blood of Jesus for our pardon cries.
Oft as earth exulting Wafts its praise on high,
Angel hosts rejoicing Make their glad reply.
Lift we, then, our voices, Swell the mighty flood,
Louder still and louder Praise the precious blood! Amen.**

HOLY GOSPEL

John 18:28-38

P The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eighteenth chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

A *Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor’s headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor’s headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. So Pilate went outside to them and said,*

P “What accusation do you bring against this man?”

A *They answered him, “If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered Him over to you.” Pilate said to them,*

P “Take Him yourselves and judge Him by your own law.”

A *The Jews said to him, “It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.” This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death He was going to die. So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to Him,*

P “Are You the King of the Jews?”

A *Jesus answered,*

P “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But My kingdom is not from the world.”

A *Then Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered,*

P “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to My voice.”

A *Pilate said to Him, “What is truth?”*

P After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them,

A *“I find no guilt in Him.”*

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

WEEKDAY/CONFIRMATION CLASS READING

SERMON HYMN

“Throned Upon the Awe-full Tree” (TLH 174)

**Throned upon the awe-full tree, King of grief, I watch with Thee.
Darkness veils Thine anguished face; None its lines of woe can trace,
None can tell what pangs unknown Hold Thee silent and alone.
Silent through those three dread hours, Wrestling with the evil pow’rs,
Left alone with human sin, Gloom around Thee and within,
Till th’appointed time is nigh, Till the Lamb of God may die.
Hark the cry that peals aloud Upward through the whelming cloud!
Thou, the Father’s only Son, Thou, His own Anointed One,
Thou dost ask Him, Can it be? “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?”
Lord, should fear and anguish roll Darkly o’er my sinful soul,
Thou, who once was thus bereft That Thine own might ne’er be left,
Teach me by that bitter cry In the gloom to know Thee nigh. Amen.**

SERMON

“Return to the Kingdom of God”

The OFFERINGS are presented

OFFERTORY

“Take My Life and Let It Be” (TLH 400; vs. 1, 6)

**Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Take my love, my Lord, I pour At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be Ever, only, all for Thee. Amen.**

THE LITANY

L O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
L O Christ,
C **have mercy.**
L O Lord,
C **have mercy.**
L O Christ,
C **hear us.**
L God the Father in heaven,
C **have mercy.**
L God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
C **have mercy.**
L God the Holy Spirit,
C **have mercy.**

L Be gracious to us.

C **Spare us, good Lord.**

L Be gracious to us.

C **Help us, good Lord.**

L From all sin, from all error, from all evil;

From the crafts and assaults of the devil; from sudden and evil death;

From pestilence and famine; from war and bloodshed; from sedition and from rebellion;

From lightning and tempest; from all calamity by fire and water; and from everlasting death:

C **Good Lord, deliver us.**

L By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity;

By Your Baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial;

By Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

L In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the Day of Judgment:

C **Help us, good Lord.**

L We poor sinners implore You

C **to hear us, O Lord.**

L To rule and govern Your holy Christian Church; to preserve all pastors and ministers of Your Church in the true knowledge and understanding of Your wholesome Word and to sustain them in holy living;

To put an end to all schisms and causes of offense; to bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived;

To beat down Satan under our feet; to send faithful laborers into Your harvest; and to accompany Your Word with Your grace and Spirit:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

L To raise those who fall and to strengthen those who stand; and to comfort and help the weakhearted and the distressed:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord**

L To give to all peoples concord and peace; to preserve our land from discord and strife; to give our country Your protection in every time of need;

To direct and defend our president and all in authority; to bless and protect our magistrates and all our people;

To watch over and help all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; to protect and guide all who travel;

To grant all women with child, and all mothers with infant children, increasing happiness in their blessings; to defend all orphans and widows and provide for them;

To strengthen and keep all sick persons and young children; to free those in bondage; and to have mercy on us all:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

L To forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers and to turn their hearts; to give and preserve for our use the kindly fruits of the earth; and graciously to hear our prayers:

C **We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

L Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,

C **we implore You to hear us.**

L Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

L Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **have mercy.**

L Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,

C **grant us Your peace.**

L O Christ,

C **hear us.**

L O Lord,

C **have mercy.**

L O Christ,

C **have mercy.**

L O Lord,

C **have mercy. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

C **Our Father who art in heaven,**

hallowed be Thy name,

Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;

give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

CLOSING COLLECT

Luther's Evening Prayer

P Let us pray.

C **I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.**

BLESSING

P The blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit be and remain with you always.

C **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

“Now Rest Beneath Night’s Shadow” (*TLH* 554, vs. 1, 5 & 6)

**Now rest beneath night’s shadow The woodland, field, and meadow,
The world in slumber lies; But, thou, my heart, awake thee,
To prayer and song betake thee; Let praise to thy Creator rise.**

**Lord Jesus, who dost love me, Oh, spread Thy wings above me
And shield me from alarm! Though evil would assail me,
Thy mercy will not fail me: I rest in Thy protecting arm.**

**My loved ones, rest securely, For God this night will surely
From peril guard your heads. Sweet slumbers may He send you
And bid His hosts attend you And through the night watch o’er your beds. Amen.**

SILENT PRAYER

POSTLUDE

Acknowledgments

The Lutheran Hymnal: St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, © 1941.

Hymn #361: Scripture: 1 Peter 2:7; Iesu, Rex admirabilis; O Jesus, King Most Wonderful; Author unknown (12th century, cento);

Translator: Edward Caswall (1848); Tune: St. Agnes; Composer: John B. Dykes (1866)

Hymn #158: Scripture: 1 Peter 1:19; Viva! viva! Gesù; Glory Be to Jesus; Text: Italian (18th century, cento); Translator: Edward Caswall (1857); Tune: Wem in Leidenstagen; Composer: Friedrich Filitz (1847)

Hymn #174: Scripture: Mark 15:34; Throned upon the Awe-full Tree; Author: John Ellerton (1875); Tune: Gethsemane; Composer: Richard Redhead (1853)

Hymn #400: Scripture: Ephesians 6:24; Take My Life and Let It Be; Author: Frances R. Havergal (1874); Tune: Patmos, Composer: William H. Havergal (1869).

Hymn #554: Scripture: Psalm 139:11; Nun ruhen alle Wälder; Now Rest Beneath Night’s Shadow; Author: Paul Gerhardt (1648, cento); Translation: composite; Tune: O Welt, ich muss dich lassen; Composer: Heinrich Isaak (c. 1490)

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